

RIDEAU CLUB,

OTTAWA, 7TH MAY, 1908.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR WILFRID LAURIER, G.C.M.G.,

PRIME MINISTER,

OTTAWA.

CHIGNECTO RAILWAY COMPANY'S

CLAIM.

SIR,—On several of my recent visits to Ottawa pressing this claim on the Government, you have referred me to the Hon. Mr. Fielding, Finance Minister, and expressed yourself as being willing to adopt and act upon any arrangement for a settlement which he might come to with me. I have seen him many times, but without being able to arrive at even any basis for a settlement. I therefore beg with much respect to address you on the subject and appeal to you on behalf of the investors not to permit the question to hang over as it has done from year to year, but to meet me in arriving at some method of closing this unfortunate business in a manner that would be at least fairly satisfactory to those concerned.

There is no difference of opinion as to the facts nor dispute as to the Company having an equitable claim on the Government. These have been repeatedly admitted. The only question to settle is the amount the Company is fairly entitled to receive and I shall agree to almost any form of reference or arbitration to determine this.

Nor is there any question whatever of the Railway being a Government enterprise. I need not here refer to Acts or quote official statements of the last Ministry, of which there are many, and all of which are as binding on the present administration as they were on those who made them. Some of these are set out in a statement of the Company's case, sent to Senators and Members a few days ago, of which a copy is forwarded herewith.

On this point I quote your predecessor, the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, who, when he took office in 1874 and met Parliament, placed the following paragraph relating to the proposed Bai Verte Canal in the speech from the Throne:—

"The report of the Chief Engineer of the Department of Public Works on the proposed canal between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy will be submitted for your consideration."

This proves the canal was a Government promoted scheme, indeed it would have been constructed by Mr. Mackenzie's Government if they had not been in doubt regarding the cost. And the Ship Railway was adopted by the Government in place of the canal because it was better; was to cost only half as much and the money was to be obtained from British investors, to enable the Government to save their own.